



Teaching Conference for
Management Educators

OBTC 2016 at Walsh University
June 8th – 11th, 2016

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

Reflection as Mutual Service: Learning through shared insights

Abstract:

We learn more than we think but tend to forget some precious lessons if we don't make a note of them. Taking notes, written or mental, is not just a great vehicle for communicating with others, but can also be a powerful tool of communication with ourselves. As educators, we are exposed to a broad range of complaints by or about our students. A common concern *from* our students is that they have not learned anything in a class. A common concern *about* our students is that they don't pay enough attention to what is discussed in class. Let's address both concerns in a reflective way by implementing the rule of three!

Keywords: Communication, reflection, reciprocal service

2) Format

- Activity or exercise
- Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)
- General discussion session

3) Time Requested:

- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- 90 Minutes

4) Planning Details:

No special needs. We will all be writing on our notepads and subsequently exchange reflections with one another.

5) Teaching Implications:

Students of today's generation demand a broad array of approaches to learning. The old fashioned lecture is increasingly making room for dialogue reflective journaling, skills that students can use in their future careers (Parent & Lovelace, 2011). While this session will not engage in journaling, there will be dialogue and reflective writing, as a strategy to enhance the sense of community in learning, and at the same time, expand insights through sharing.

Lawrence (2011) describes personal, reflective writing as "[W]riting exercises and assignments that are self-reflective, self-referential, or self-expressive in nature. In short, [...] exercises that ask the writer to write about herself or himself" (p. 193). Reflective writing is not new. As long ago as in 1990, Forman and Kelly published a book in which they suggested for students to write about self-perceived success and joyful moments in educational experiences. Four years later, in 1994, Locker

published a book in which he encouraged the trend of asking students to write about experiences that had given them great personal satisfaction.

“The ability to reflect has long been seen as an important prerequisite to effective management decision making, especially in decision environments that involve unique elements to which there are no defined solutions” (Hay, Peltier & Drago, 2004). It is common knowledge that such is exactly the nature of management performance today: there are continuously new challenges on the horizon, and solutions are not for grabs from prior experiences.

Fortunately, Lawrence (2011) comments that personal, reflective writing, is better developed in Management education than in many other disciplines, and considers that a great advantage. In this session, we will aim to engage in personal, reflective writing, not merely to help us focus on our own path from here on, but to consider adopting this way of self-based communication for our students.

At the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the value of taking proper mental and written notes during learning sessions
- Have practiced constructive, reflective and mutually servicing learning
- Have a new instrument for students to use in their OB courses

6) Session Description and Plan:

This session aims to:

- Enhance OB professors’ understanding about the importance of students reflecting on their learning process.
- Help them understand that this is an easy, fun, and very rewarding exercise that can help students understand the purpose and importance of the course.

We plan on executing this workshop in the spirit of the message we try to convey: as an alternating session of dialogue and reflecting writing.

1. We will first invite participants to introduce themselves and make one statement they feel strongly about. This can be a quote, something recently learned, or a theory they carry out or teach frequently. 10 min.

We will then present the approach for the rest of the program:

2. We will briefly share some history on reflective writing and in-class dialogue, followed by an explanation of what “*The Rule of Three*” entails, what our experiences with this 10 min.

exercise have been so far in our classes, and how students have responded to it.

3. We will then ask each participant to engage in their own version of “*The Rule of Three*”. 10 min.
4. Subsequently, we will first explain the purpose of sharing “*The Rule of Three*” with others, and then invite the participants to do so. 20 min.
5. Feedback: we will invite feedback and questions from participants to enhance mutual learning. 10 min.
6. End of session (total) 60 min.

7) Application to Conference theme:

Reflecting and sharing are outstanding ways to create and enhance a unified and service oriented spirit. When we share our insights, we serve others and invite them to consider more than just their own perspective. This is critical in leadership and the cultivation of a desire to serve.

Through the process of reflection, we come to understand the value our fellow participants add to our insights, and through sharing our own reflections, we help others perceive learning from angles they may have failed to consider. Reflecting, writing, and sharing is also a proven way of connecting with one another, while it enhances learning about ourselves as well. We believe that this exercise will deepen student learning, and help us understand the impact our educational efforts have made on our students.

8) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

We have only presented this session once before. This proposal consists of an idea we received from a colleague during a “best practice” session in our institution, which we found useful, and subsequently, implemented with great success in our own courses. Through this session, we would like to pay the valuable strategy forward of serving one another and thus enhance insights and learning.

References and/or Additional Materials:

Forman, J., & Kelly, K. (1990). *Random house guide to business writing*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Hay, A., Peltier, J. W., & Drago, W. A. (2004). Reflective learning and on-line management education: A comparison of traditional and on-line MBA students. *Strategic Change*, 13(4), 169-182.
- Lawrence, H. (2013). Personal, Reflective Writing: A Pedagogical Strategy for Teaching Business Students to Write. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(2), 192-206.
- Locker, K. (1994). *Business and administrative communication*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Parent, J. D., & Lovelace, K. J. (2011). Creating a learning organization in the management classroom through dialogue and reflective journaling. *Business Renaissance Quarterly*, 6(2), 21-42.